

work and community living as also important in the development of a whole person. It feels that Miss Thompson's "useless knowledge" is often truly useless unless a student is given some idea of what to do with what he knows. It believes in breadth of curriculum, but at the same time finds necessary discipline in intensive work in a specialized field.

These are, however, minor differences in the discussion of real liberal education versus narrow and specialized training, whether it be technical, vocational, or academic. Black Mountain believes, and has for ten years attempted to realize its beliefs, that only through a truly liberal education can a young person come to any understanding of the complex and chaotic world in which he lives; that only by coming to see the world as a world of people, and by coming to know some of the reasons people agree or disagree, the ways in which they live and work side by side, can a student approach the ideal of a better society. A college must be concerned with scrutinizing the values of modern society and the frameworks through which people see themselves and their world; it must question convention and tradition, be unafraid to condemn or to criticize, be continually in search of the basic, the fundamental, and the real. In time of war, when meaningless verbal symbols are multiplied a hundredfold, when emotionalism tends to replace analysis, when propa-

ganda takes the place of information, and when unconsidered judgments make a thousand intermediate greys black or white, such education is of tremendous importance.

During December, Alfred Kazin, book editor of *The New Republic*, and author of "On Native Ground", visited the College and led a discussion on "American Writing and the War". There is a feeling on the part of many writers today, he believes, that it is morally wrong to write anything not directly concerned with the war; that one must write ponderous social novels, discussions of commando tactics, lengthy eulogies of naval victories purporting to be poetry but poetical only in form. Lyric poetry has come to be considered by such writers as somehow treacherous, immoral, "ivory-tower". In a time when a realization of the potential and very real beauty of the world is more necessary than ever before, we read book after book of factual reportage on this or that area of conflict; we read romantic historical narratives, popularizations of technical problems, discussions of the possibilities of victory by land, by sea, or by air—anything, in fact, to keep us from thinking about what is basic and fundamental to war time as it is to any time: the never-ending, ever-changing, eternally important relationship of man to the world in which he lives, to its beauties and its cruelties, to its living people and its cold facts.

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BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE BULLETIN  
Volume I

January 1943  
Number 2

Issued four times a year, in November, January, February, and April. Application for entry as second-class matter at the Postoffice at Black Mountain, N. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912, is pending.